



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY **NEWS RELEASE**

Department of Toxic Substances Control

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El Toro Approved by DTSC and Navy

Sacramento --- The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) agreed with a United States Navy (the Navy) Finding of Suitability to Transfer (FOST) determination that 2,801 acres of the former Marine Corps Air Station – El Toro in Orange County is suitable for sale and redevelopment. This is the largest amount of acreage on a closed military base that DTSC has declared to be clean for reuse.

This property is now acceptable for unrestricted land use and will be sold to potential buyers during an on-line auction. The Navy plans to use proceeds from the sale to fund environmental cleanups at other closed Navy and Marine Corps facilities on the West Coast.

Agreement with the FOST means that the cleanup on the property satisfied DTSC's cleanup standards consistent with the proposed use. This land may be developed for residential, commercial, industrial, or recreational use. The Navy will retain another 992 acres of property at El Toro until DTSC and the United States Environmental Protection Agency have determined that ongoing cleanup work in those areas is complete.

In making this FOST determination, DTSC and the Navy worked cooperatively to integrate the hazardous waste management requirements of the Resource Conservation and Recover Act (RCRA) into the federal process for cleaning hazardous waste sites on the Superfund National Priorities List.

"Completion of the FOST process is an important step in restoring the former El Toro Marine Base to productive use," said B.B. Blevins, DTSC Director. "Reuse of this property will benefit the local community and help California's economy recover from this base closure."

El Toro operated from 1943 to 1999 as a Marine Corps pilot fleet operations training facility, master jet station and aviation center. The facility included runways, aircraft maintenance, training facilities, housing and other support facilities. El Toro's operations resulted in the releases of hazardous substances into the environment that were serious enough to warrant listing the base on the US EPA's Superfund National Priorities List.

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The hazardous wastes that were generated by base operations were managed under RCRA permit from 1993 to 2003.

In addition to concurring with the FOST, DTSC made a RCRA Corrective Action Completion Determination and modified the RCRA Facility boundary to exclude those areas determined to be clean. These actions mean that there are no remaining RCRA Corrective Action obligations on the sale parcels, allowing the Navy to sell the property without transferring the liability for additional cleanup work to new owners.

The Navy's FOST documents the suitability of federally owned property for transfer to non-federal ownership. The FOST summarizes the Navy's environmental investigation and cleanup activities conducted on the parcels proposed for transfer. Each parcel was evaluated for hazardous substance releases that may have occurred based on the types of historical uses at the base. The locations included areas where hazardous substances were handled, stored, spilled, or disposed. Sampling was conducted to confirm that all contaminants were removed.

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The Department of Toxic Substances Control's mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the environment and ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.